

WHAT DO THE MARTIANS THINK OF US NOW?

What Do You Suppose Inhabitants of Our Nearest Celestial Neighbor Make of the Performance Which They Are Probably Able to See Disturbing the Earth?

IT'S a pretty mess that the Martians may see upon the face of old Mother Earth if they are able to see anything at all!

The bewildered creatures are perhaps staying up nights to see it, or else going down during the days into deep dark wells to satisfy their curiosity.

A line stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Swiss Alps which almost continuously belches out red and yellow flame and clouds of smoke; another line stretching from the Austrian Alps clear up to the northern seas which likewise continually belches out red and yellow flame and clouds of smoke; and strange looking objects upon the blue waters of the oceans which also spit out flame and smoke are the things that must meet their startled gaze.

Do the Martians realize that a war is going on full swing on old planet Earth? Or, being the occupants of an older planet, have they progressed so far in intelligence and civilization that they have actually forgotten that there can be such a thing as war?

It may be that the Martians have gone so far ahead of us in the upward climb that they look down upon us merely as poor earthly white trash. They probably have been observing us for a great many more years than we know about with their powerful and highly perfected telescopes. It may be that they know all that we do and, have been doing for many centuries past, and knowing this, it may be that they have absolutely refused to give us any recognition until we have reached a degree of civilization equal to their own.

If Mars has inhabitants there is no question but that these inhabitants have reached a higher degree of civilization than earth beings possess, and that, therefore, all their tribal, national and racial wars were fought out long ago. Their interest, surprise and disgust towards earth at this time must be tremendous. If they

have any word worse than "barbarians" they have unquestionably been hurling it down at us night and day for the past five months.

The Martians undoubtedly have better instruments for observing us than we have for observing them. But for every possibility we encounter in interpreting the markings on that planet they would have a dozen possibilities in interpreting the features on the surface of the earth. Nearly everybody who has investigated

the subject of life on Mars has come to the conclusion that if there is any life there it is also a higher degree of intelligence because it is an older planet than the earth.

Yet the intelligence has been associated for ages with a planet having only slight elevations of land, a very thin atmosphere, a scarcity of water which has been used for ages through artificial channels, having vast tracts of desert plains and within these deserts large oases fed by irrigating

canals, regions of sparse vegetation and no large bodies of water.

With these conditions going beyond the history of the present inhabitants what must the Martians think of the surface features of this world and the strange things that are now taking place upon it?

If a Martian can observe the earth he will see large red and yellowish areas, extensive greenish areas and beside large regions of varying shades of blue, possibly, occupying three-fourths of the earth's surface.

The yellow areas he would interpret as desert land. The greenish areas he might consider as vegetation. But what would he make out of the larger regions of blue? This would certainly puzzle him because, unfamiliar with oceans, he could not believe that such vast tracts could really be water. And what would he possibly think of the strange objects moving about on those blue areas, singly and in groups, now standing still, now rushing this way and that, with strange flashes of flame and puffs of smoke hurrying from them, and with some of these objects disap-

pearing suddenly into the blue without any apparent reason? What could the Martians possibly think of the battle fleets of the warring nations if he is able to see them?

It would be easy for the Martian to interpret our polar caps for his planet still has caps of its own; and he would know what the waters at the edges of these caps mean, but it would be almost impossible for him to believe that such vast tracts of blue could really be water.

If some audacious interpreter on Mars suggested that these tracts of blue were water he would be answered by some one showing him that these so called bodies of water bordered vast tracts of sandy deserts with no canals running into them for irrigation or navigation purposes. Even the polar caps would be doubted because they seem to extend far down into temperate latitudes and on their recedence in summer there would be seen no dark bordering seas as the result of their melting.

The vegetation instead of unfolding at the north and gradually extending southwards would unfold in a contrary direction, appearing first in south temperate latitudes and developing northward. The perennial character of the vegetation in the tropics would puzzle him.

Even if he recognized oases in the deserts of America and Africa, the results of wells or springs, he could not believe them to be vegetation for he would detect no irrigating canals running into them.

He would come to the conclusion that no creature could possibly exist on the earth as the tremendous force of gravitation with great atmospheric pressure would forbid the existence of any organic forms. And if some other Martian were to suggest that the confusion on earth at the present time was the result of a war and that different bodies of men were hurling lead and steel missiles at one another the Martian scientists would laugh in scorn and say that with the force of gravitation on earth many times stronger than that on Mars it would be impossible for earth beings to invent engines powerful enough to overcome the great pull of gravitation that would be exerted on these missiles.

At the same time there would be others with more imagination than the scientists who would insist that the earth beings would develop powers great enough to conquer the forces of nature arrayed against them just as imaginative beings on earth protest to doubting scientists that the Martians are entirely able to conquer the different difficulties met with on their own planet.

The immense clouds veiling the earth's surface at times are unquestionably rightly interpreted by the Martians yet at the same time they would fail to understand how the earth beings would be able to withstand the terrific impact of the falling raindrops. If a Martian were brought to earth and were struck by a raindrop it would wound him as seriously as a bullet wounds an earth being, for the Martian's body is built to stand only the slightest resistance. There might be some Martians who would come to the conclusion that if the earth beings found it necessary to fight wars that side would win which could invent instruments to bring down rain on the opposing fighters and to protect its own forces by rain-proof armor. The scientists would print statements to the effect that there couldn't be any armies on earth for while people could protect themselves well enough from the crushing rain in cities covered over with rain-proof armor the men who would compose

these armies would have to have legs of iron and a crust like a turtle to be impervious to the rain that might catch them unaware in the fields.

Another feature of earth life which would probably lead the Martian scientists to believe that war would be impossible in the widely different seasons. Believing that Mars is perfectly balanced as to temperature, he reasons that the earth being so much nearer to the sun would be too hot in summer for an army to exist in the open and too cold in the winter and too in winter.

